

news

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FOR PARTNERS IN EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT IN ALBERTA



Wetaskiwin's 2008 air show

Collaboration and communication key factors in air show success

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Take the 2008 Wetaskiwin Air Show; for example. July 27 and 28 was the third time that an air show was held in Wetaskiwin. Located on the site of the Reynolds Alberta Museum, which is also the home of Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame, safety was the biggest factor.

"Putting on an air show is a significant undertaking," said Mike Parsons, Head of Special Projects at the Reynolds Alberta Museum and Project Manager for the 2008 Wetaskiwin Air Show. "There are so many varied elements involved, from the air show itself to traffic in safety to communications and promotion. With the museum being a prominent institution, the number one priority is that any event associated with it has to be safe for everyone."



The 2008 Wetaskiwin Air Show drew more than 20,000 people.

Add to that the fact that the expected attendance of 20,000 to 25,000 more than doubled to 71,000 and the good collaboration takes on a whole new perspective. With the museum's one encompassing 200 acres, the need for collaboration and communication was imperative.

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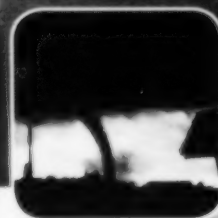
Alberta

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The 2008 Wetaskiwin Air Show drew record crowds.

Add to that the fact that the expected attendance of 20,000 - 25,000 more than doubled to 51,000 and the word collaboration takes on a whole new perspective. With the museum site encompassing 208 acres, the need for collaboration and communication was imperative.

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Alberta

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Collaborate then celebrate

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) was created by the Government of Alberta through legislation in the spring of 2007. The agency brings together the Fire Commissioner's Office and Emergency Management Alberta to enhance safety services for Albertans. This was both a positive and strategic decision by government.

During the past 16 months the department has celebrated many accomplishments, in particular, the agency-wide collaboration to establish the Agency Response Readiness Centre (ARRC), which has already proven its value beyond our expectations. A tremendous job was done by the field officers and the Disaster Recovery Branch in responding to critical events such as the southeast windstorms, wildfires and floods. Our work to support government departments will continue - with a strong effort from agency staff in those roles.

Together, while continuing to improve in our service to Albertans, we have laid a piece of a solid foundation with every milestone:

1. The Government Emergency Management Regulation enables the agency to provide strategic policy direction and leadership to the government, persons and organizations (partners) that have a role in Alberta's fire and emergency management system.



Dave Hodgins

2. Stakeholder consultation has taken place across Alberta where our partners have been consulted, talked to and listened to. Collaboration on meeting their needs is helping to shape the future of the agency.

3. Mandate letter from the Honourable Ray Danyluk, the Minister responsible

for Alberta Municipal Affairs and the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, has clearly identified the priorities of government that he expects addressed through the business of the agency. The Minister was very clear about our mandate in his letter. His letter states in part, "The Agency is to be operational, visible and cooperate with communities, industry and all levels of governments. We will lead a high-performance fire and emergency management system that unites our partners and provides a comprehensive level of public safety and response readiness, in order to:

- prevent hazards from becoming emergencies,
- prepare when preventative measures cannot be guaranteed,
- respond and take immediate and decisive action when emergencies occur to minimize the affects of the emergency, and
- assist where appropriate with community recovery and environmental remediation following emergency events.

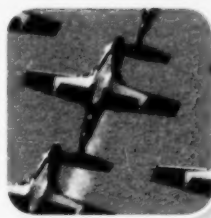
Note: the mandate letter is available at www.aema.ca

Highlights

From this issue...

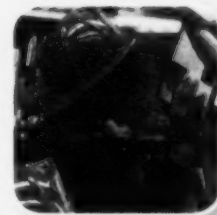
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Snowbirds in
Wetaskiwin



Page 9
FIPEN meets with AEMA

Page 20
Celebrating
Fire Prevention
Week 2008



4. The agency's guiding principals are:

- leadership
- preventing harm
- maintaining public confidence
- operationally ready
- customer focused
- continuous improvement

5. The agency's strategic priorities are:

- Prevent hazards from becoming emergencies through risk-based planning policies and community planning, and by strengthening community awareness and preparedness.
- Prepare when preventative measures cannot be guaranteed by supporting the development and long-term sustainability of fire and emergency management capabilities in Alberta's communities, industries and government.
- Be constantly vigilant, operationally capable and ready to respond to assess situations and determine resource requirements and coordinate the provincial response when required.
- Provide trustworthy guidance and direction in fire and emergency management and provide accurate, timely and relevant information, advice and support to Alberta's communities, industries and government.
- Assist with community recovery and environmental remediation following emergency events, through financial and other means of assistance, to help Albertans and municipalities mitigate the impact of and recover from disasters.
- Enhance research, develop and promote best practices and national or international standards in fire, emergency management and other related disciplines, and ensure the knowledge is transferred for the benefit and sustainability of our communities, industries, environment and economy.
- Ensure the agency is focused on service to citizens by knowing and understanding the needs of the people we serve, demonstrating our commitment to quality by measuring our performance and continuously improving and help ensure Albertans know and are comforted by the fact their communities are being supported by the Government of Alberta before, during and after emergency events.

The agency brings together the Fire Commissioner's Office and Emergency Management Alberta to enhance safety services for Albertans. This was both a positive and strategic decision by government.

6. The agency organization will ensure key lines of business are aimed at

meeting needs and expectations of people and organizations served by the agency, increasing effective coordination and collaboration between AEMA and its partners within the emergency management system and helping develop a citizen-focused and quality service-based agency culture.

Through our strategic priorities that are aimed at achieving our mandate we will continue to collaborate on our mission to create *"a province-wide emergency management system that protects the people of Alberta, their property, environment and the economy from the effects of emergency events."*

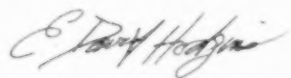
Our success and the success of our stakeholders and their services depend on the extent to which we all embrace and support a joined-up, collaborative approach. In this respect, we consider collaboration to be a process of participation through which people, groups and organizations work together to achieve desired results. Collaboration within the agency, and especially involving our stakeholders, is essential as we seek to meet our mandate and expectations.

A significant role and responsibility of the agency is to ensure all government ministries and agencies are connected in the interest of life safety and the protection of property, the environment and the economy. Collaborating and being connected across government with all of our stakeholders means we have solid communication strategies in place, we are

coordinating initiatives related to fire and emergency management services and we are cooperating to achieve our mandate. Having said this, we know municipalities and industry are responsible for first response to the vast majority of emergency events that occur in the province and our job is to provide assistance in keeping with the Government of Alberta's Goal 7: "Alberta will be a safe place to live, work and raise families."

What does collaboration really mean to us? Collaboration is creating opportunities and processes to connect with, and then function within, a joined-up system. The agency's role is to provide support and assistance with securing an extensive assortment of resources that may be needed by local fire and emergency management professionals, depending upon the circumstance as they respond to, take control of and recover from an emergency event. Our role is not one of command and control, but rather, as I have said publicly many times, "we will be there to help and by helping we mean the hand-on-the-shoulder approach."

In the end, it is all about people – people with focus, commitment, courage, integrity and optimism. As said by Sir Isaac Newton, "if I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants." Now this is collaboration. 🙌



E. David Hodgins CEM, S.B.St.J.
Managing Director,
Alberta Emergency Management Agency

as needed, we created a staging area for these individuals. We also provided them with a second set of radios," added Parsons.

One of the most important initial tasks was planning and getting the various agencies involved together – city and county fire departments, EMS, RCMP, first aid and others that would play an important role in the event's success. The planning for emergency management got underway six months in advance of the air show, and one of their most important duties was developing a very comprehensive Emergency Response Plan (ERP) that covered every aspect of the event. Parsons advised that one of the most critical parts of the ERP was the responsibilities list, which scheduled out who was responsible for each activity and how they would respond. He noted that they also dovetailed the air show's ERP to the county and City of Wetaskiwin's municipal emergency plan.

"To successfully put on this event, we needed the support and cooperation of numerous agencies. It is gratifying to know that we received fabulous support from all the agencies that needed to be involved. That is

Wetaskiwin Air Show at a glance

Thursday night – volunteer training; 143 volunteers put in a total of 1,879 hours.

Friday – practice day with EMS and fire personnel. Time with the media too.

Saturday & Sunday – free admission to the museum, static displays and air show activities both days. 51,000 people attended the event.

*Each year, members of
the air show planning team attend
the International Council of
Air Shows (ICAS) convention,
a four-day event that draws 1,500
delegates from around
the world.*

probably one of our biggest success factors, along with the willingness of our volunteers to do whatever was needed to make the show a success," Parsons proudly stated.

In addition to establishing a command post, Parsons and his team created two emergency routes, both on and off site, arranged for medical equipment and also communicated with hospitals and STARS Air Ambulance in advance of the event. As the museum site holds only 1,300 vehicles, they also coordinated Park and Ride bus services and controlled the parking availability on site.

There are also specific standards that have to be met with the Canadian Forces Snowbirds in terms of emergency preparedness, security and accommodation. On the Wednesday before the event, fire and rescue personnel participated in the training provided by one of the Canadian Forces Snowbirds staff.



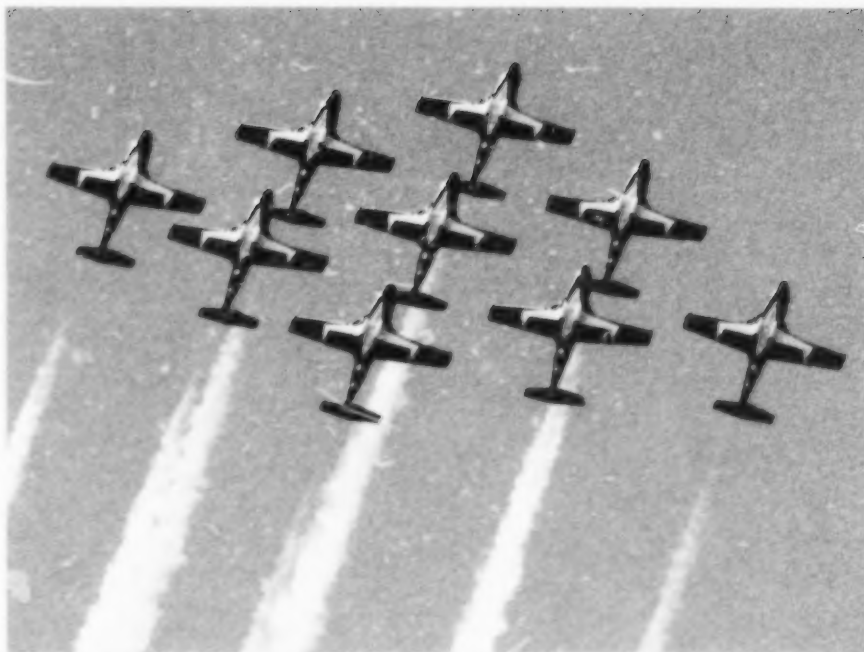
Crowds starting to gather for the Wetaskiwin air show.

"We were fortunate that we had one of their aircraft – a CT114 Tudor – in our collection at the Reynolds-Alberta Museum. The trainer showed us what to do from a safety, extraction and fire service point of view. Then we had firefighters from the Wetaskiwin and Millet fire departments go through that exercise again. After that we went through the emergency response plan with our first aid people and the RCMP to ensure that everyone knew exactly what to do," Parsons recollected.

Another key aspect of the event's success was delegating responsibilities.

"In 2006 I was responsible for emergency management of the site, but when I took on the role of Project Manager for the 2008 event, Mitch Carson, City of Wetaskiwin Fire Chief, stepped in to take on the position of emergency management services coordinator. And we were fortunate to have Cory Schram, training officer with the Edmonton Airport Authority serving as our technical advisor. Ken Carlson, fire chief for the County of Wetaskiwin, was also involved in the air show and provided support from the rural side, including the coordination of road blocks and ensuring that heavy equipment was strategically placed for use in the event of a major incident. We worked with all the fire departments in the County of Wetaskiwin, which includes Millet, Mulhurst, South Pigeon Lake, Winfield and Buck Lake as well as the City of Wetaskiwin Fire Department. Camrose was also on the alert in case they were needed," stated Parsons.

Even though the 2008 air show finished at the end of July, the collaboration continues thanks to Parsons' willingness to share his knowledge with others. Each year, members of the air show planning team attend the International Council of Air Shows (ICAS) convention, a four-day event that draws 1,500 delegates from around the world. Parsons advised that emergency planning is one of the primary issues discussed at the conference and based on the success experienced in Wetaskiwin, they shared the ERP with delegates. "I'm very proud of the success of the Wetaskiwin shows. It's not a one person job. It takes an entire team working together to create a successful



Canada's Snowbirds perform at the 2008 Air Show in Wetaskiwin.



An aerial view of the record crowds at the 2008 Air Show in Wetaskiwin.

event. We managed the risks very well, so it only made sense to share our success with others," added Parsons.

That sentiment is certainly shared with others. City of Wetaskiwin Fire Chief Mitch Carson added: "It takes passion to be involved in something like this, and everyone was more than willing to get involved. Thanks to their collective efforts, the air show ran like clockwork."

The air show's technical advisor also commented on the exemplary organization of the event. "The 2008 show was a very well run and well organized event. In terms of emergency management, they considered every possibility from sunstroke to missing children to an air disaster," stated Schram. "My hat goes off to the organizers, and I was proud to be a part of this year's air show." 🏆

Collaborating on a national level

The Canadian Council on Emergency Management Organizations (CCEMO) is a national association focused on strengthening the professional relationship between provincial and territorial agencies responsible for emergency management.

The thrust of the CCEMO is to improve cooperation between Canada's provinces and territories on matters related to emergency management, to seek consensus on emergency management issues, and to

undertake cooperative activities that enhance emergency preparedness for all Canadians.

Recent activities of the CCEMO include the development of a strategic plan and the agreement on a number of objectives within the following four strategic directions:

- The CCEMO has a clear mandate and validation by the provincial and territorial deputy ministers and ministers responsible for emergency management.

- The CCEMO enables the cross-jurisdictional sharing of best practices, information and knowledge.
- The CCEMO provides cross-jurisdictional emergency management opportunities to support knowledgeable and skilled human resources.
- The CCEMO develops collective solutions to emerging response issues.

Future issues of *FIREnews* will include updates about the CCEMO and its activities. 📌

For more information about CCEMO, contact Colin Blair at colin.blair@gov.ab.ca

Agency Response Readiness Centre update

Information collaboration critical to centre's effectiveness

BY KELLY BOKOVAY, CPL – Corp. of Commissioners, ARRC and Trent R. West, Acting Manager of GEOC/ARRC – Alberta Emergency Management Agency

THE AGENCY (AEMA) RESPONSE READINESS CENTRE serves as the Alberta Emergency Management Agency's communication and response coordination centre. Staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the ARRC is a central point for the collection, evaluation and dissemination of information relevant to the agency and its partners concerning a single incident or multiple incidents occurring in the province of Alberta. The ARRC is responsible for coordinating the initial response and maintaining support for a response to a natural or man-made disaster until such time as the Government Emergency Operations Centre is activated, should this be necessary.

A daily situational report is distributed to over 500 people throughout the country and into the states of Montana and Pennsylvania. In addition to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the agency's Managing Director, all agency staff and specified partners, the report is distributed to any stakeholders that request it. The report contains a summary of the previous 24 hours of fire and emergency management-related issues in the province.

Besides the immediate actions associated with critical events and reporting, the daily routine of ARRC duty officers also includes:

- tracking the travels of all of our field officers throughout the province in the event that their deployment is required,
- monitoring the Emergency Public Warning System and activating any Amber Alerts that police forces may require, and
- monitoring multiple media sources for any indication of critical incidents around the province.

The ARRC's main task is the collection, evaluation and dissemination of information on specific emergent incidents. Currently, the ARRC receives 25 - 40 calls or pages and about that same number of emails each day, resulting in report generation for municipal requests and follow-up calls to provide or receive additional information. To maintain this situational awareness, the ARRC is in constant contact with its counterparts at Alberta Environment, Alberta Transportation, the Energy Resources Conservation Board and, to a smaller degree, the RCMP and Solicitor General's Office. As well, the ARRC is in regular contact with agency field officers, who are a primary information source on incidents when they assist municipalities with incident management. In addition to

media monitoring, information is gleaned from websites of various agencies such as Environment Canada and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development. The ARRC duty officer works collaboratively with the agency's duty manager to ensure the flow of information to our stakeholders is timely and accurate.

ARRC is responsible to ensure that the agency's duty manager has all the information needed in order to make decisions regarding what, if any, agency resources should be deployed to an incident.

The ARRC maintains files on all the incidents it reports on as well as an archive of all daily situational reports. Daily logs are kept to capture information that may not be related to particular incident files.

The ARRC also responds to requests for information and assistance with respect to fire-related matters such as fire code issues and fire prevention. Municipalities that require assistance with fire investigations can access this service through the ARRC.

The ARRC is focused on continuous improvement and will expand and enhance its services to the agency, stakeholders and partners as it evolves in the future. 📌

Strategic partnerships focus of AFCA

BY BILL PURDY – Executive Director, Alberta Emergency Management Agency

Since my last article for "FIREnews" the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association's (AFCA) Board held a planning session. The theme was "Strategic Partnerships." The AFCA have a number of affiliated groups that interrelate with the fire services and the AFCA. I plan to meet with the various groups this fall to build a stronger partnership. Attached is the Board statement and the nine strategic goals that were approved.

We realize this organization has a rich history and has accomplished many goals in its 63 years of service to you. We also acknowledge that the fire service has changed and the landscape in which we now work is dramatically different from our beginning.

It is our desire to lead this organization into the future and strengthen our ability to serve you. During our planning session we identified a new vision to be a voice for the fire service. This new vision consists of nine key goals that must be focused on.

We ask you as members to take a few minutes to review the goals and provide us with your feedback.

The nine goals are:

- A) AFCA has efficient staff to achieve its goals
- B) AFCA is the acknowledged representative of the entire Alberta Fire Services
- C) AFCA employs an effective marketing strategy to achieve its goals
- D) AFCA is financially sustainable
- E) AFCA is a pro-active organization focused on a clear set of priorities
- F) AFCA provides effective training and education
- G) AFCA achieves its goal and objectives through the use of effective communications strategies
- H) AFCA creates effective partnerships to achieve its goals

I urge members to review the nine goals and if we have failed to recognize some other area, please contact me.

Resolution on recruitment and retention

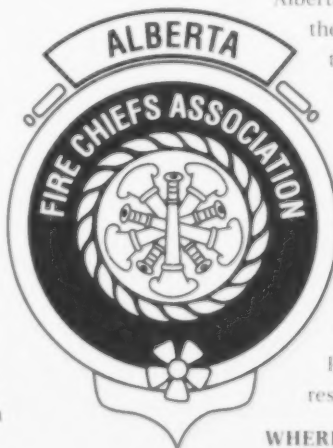
At the annual conference the resolution was approved. The AFCA in partnership with the AEMA and the Fire Commissioner's office will be holding public hearings across

Alberta. Fire Chief Brad Mason of

the Town of Taber will assist the task force. At the time of writing no details are available, however when this is published the hearings may be under way. The tentative plans are to hold hearings in each of the seven regions throughout Alberta.

Your views are welcome.

Provided below is the resolution as approved.



WHEREAS, the vast majority of municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements are providing fire suppression services to protect their citizens and protect their community infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS, the government of Alberta receives a benefit from municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements fire services since they are mandated by the Emergency Management Act to have a "Municipal Emergency Plan" in place and Intergovernmental Relations and Aboriginal Relations to request provincial Government work with communities to create a provincially-based recruitment and retention incentive program including but not limited to:

1. The development and provision of a comprehensive injury and medical plan including disability caused by work-related exposures for every volunteer

Reminder that the 2009 conference will be held in Red Deer at the Capri Center, May 23-27.

Fire Chief Peter Krich of Camrose is the conference chair. Peter can be contacted at 780-672-2906.

firefighter employed in the province to protect them and their families from the financial effects that can be caused by serious injury or death at an emergency event.

2. The inclusion of volunteer firefighters in the Workers' Compensation legislation to protect them from work-related cancers.
3. Providing payments in lieu of taxes where a community offers property tax reductions to volunteer firefighters.
4. Payments in lieu of salary where a business permits its employees to leave work to serve on a community's fire service during an emergency situation.
5. Provide financial assistance to communities that provide a form of pension earned by each volunteer firefighter as long as the volunteer is active in service to the community.

The President, Brian McEvoy, Second Vice-President and I meet with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Honourable Ray Danyluk. A number of subjects were discussed, including the debate on family fireworks, which the Board has discussed with the Minister previously. While we have the Minister's support, he now requires documented evidence of the misuse of fire works. Under the present reporting system, if a person is injured while using fire works, and medical attention is required, unless the local fire department is involved, it's documented as a medical call. I'm urging all departments who may have had incidents involving fire works to please forward me the information. 🙏

Strategic restructuring enhances agency response capabilities

Lead by example! This is a phrase that has proven its worth time after time. One look at the organization chart of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency will quickly show that the Incident Command System model has been used to guide the recent restructuring. The agency, now a little over one year old, has morphed to better respond to the nature of its business.

The Managing Director's Office now includes a proposed Assistant Managing Director's position responsible for the functions of the Fire Commissioner and Administrator of Emergency Management, and two executive positions responsible for two distinct divisions:

- Operations Division
- Administration, Finance and Training.

Communications staff, the Special Projects office and the Stakeholder Relations unit also report directly to the Managing Director.

The Planning and Operations Division includes the Agency Readiness and Response Centre (ARRC), the Government Emergency Operations Centre (GEOC), the Field Operations branch, the Hazard Planning section, the Business Continuity section and the Risk Management section. Colin Lloyd is the Acting Executive Director.

The Administration, Finance and Training Division includes the Strategic Corporate Services branch, the

Recovery Programs branch and the Training, Research and Accreditation Branch and Colin Blair is the Acting Executive Director.

Ernie Polsom continues to fill the position of Acting Fire Commissioner in addition to his other responsibilities as Director of Field Operations.

As with any new organization, work continues daily to fine-tune the functions and focus of the agency. Many projects are being rolled out, such as ARRC, in response to input received from stakeholders, and field staff continue to serve in all parts of the province. The agency is striving to lead by example! 📌

Stakeholder consultations update

A prerequisite to collaboration!

BY FRED TYRRELL – Manager of Stakeholder Relations, Alberta Emergency Management Agency

How can we collaborate if we do not communicate? Collaboration implies working together to achieve a common goal. How can we do that if we do not know what each other is trying to achieve? How can we do that if we do not know what each other is struggling to overcome?

The executive committee of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency attended 14 meetings, in all parts of the province, in the spring of this year. At those meetings they talked to and listened to municipal partners. These partners included the fire service, EMS, police and peace officers, directors of emergency management, disaster social service coordinators, municipal administrators, elected officials, search and rescue volunteers, amateur radio operators and health officials.

The sessions talked about where the agency is at, and where it is going. They also talked about where the various municipalities were at, and where they want to go. In some

cases, the same story was told from meeting to meeting, showing a strong similarity between all communities. But there were also regional differences and differences between the individual communities.

The notes of all 14 meetings were distributed to all participants. Anyone else who is interested in reading the actual discussion notes can contact Fred Tyrrell, Manager of Stakeholder Relations with the agency, to obtain a copy.

The executive committee will continue to plan similar sessions in the future. The First Nations and Metis Settlement emergency management leaders will have the same

opportunity to talk with and hear from the leaders of the agency. Industry will also have meetings set up so that they can communicate directly with the emergency management leaders of the Government of Alberta.

It is not enough to simply meet once. The power of these meetings is to share and to influence future activity. Even before the analysis of the 14 meetings was completed, for example, changes were being made to plans already in place in the agency and new activities were being explored based on what the leaders heard. Subsequent meetings will be needed to bring each of the partners up-to-date with changes, both internal and external. 📌

The Stakeholder Relations Unit of the Alberta Emergency Management Agency can be reached by calling directly to 780-644-1791 (after using the 310-0000 toll-free line).

Recommendations drive FIPEN public education efforts

ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2008, the steering committee of the Fire and

Injury Prevention Educator's Network (FIPEN) met with a number of Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) executive management (including Dave Hodgins, Managing Director; Colin Blair, Executive Director, Administration and Training; Pat Henneberry, Director, Training, Research and Accreditation; Ernie Polsom, Acting Fire Commissioner and Director, Field Operations; and Spence Sample, Senior Manager, Special Projects - Training Analysis).

At this meeting the FIPEN Steering Committee presented 12 recommendations and a lively discussion followed. The AEMA will work with the two co-chairs of FIPEN to review the proposed recommendations to move fire and injury prevention forward and provide a response back to FIPEN.

The vision of FIPEN is making Alberta the safest place to live. Its mission is to:

- contribute to a reduction in the frequency and severity of fires and injuries in Alberta,
- make fire and injury prevention education a priority for the Alberta fire/emergency services, and
- recognize and reduce gaps in the delivery of fire and injury prevention education in Alberta.

The origins of FIPEN date back to May 2005. Since that time, the steering committee has engaged in quarterly meetings and with the support of a consultant.



FIPEN meeting with AEMA executive on September 30, 2008

The AEMA will work with the two co-chairs of FIPEN to review the proposed recommendations to move fire and injury prevention forward...

The following is a summary of key achievements:

- conducted a survey to gain an understanding of the current status of public education in Alberta fire/emergency service;
- held quarterly meetings to develop a terms of reference, strategic plan, review fire and injury prevention programs, research, network and organize presentations from experts, identify

priorities, form five working groups, develop a set of final recommendations and support the consultant; developed two reports (by the FIPEN consultant, Liza Sunley), with input from FIPEN Steering Committee members and external content experts:

- **Fire Safety Promotion and Injury Prevention: A Report on the Issues and Activities in Alberta** (March 2007)
- **A Safer Alberta: Moving Injury Prevention Forward in Alberta's Fire and Emergency Services** (September 2008);
- acted as a resource to the Standing Committee on Public Education and Prevention (PEP) of the Fire Services Advisory Board (FSAC). Developed a set of recommendations for FSAC on the future direction of public fire safety and injury prevention education in Alberta, and
- presented final recommendations to the AEMA executive on September 30, 2008. 📌

For further information on FIPEN, please contact Mahendra Wijayasinghe, Director, Research and Analysis at AEMA. Phone 780-415-0546 or email mahendra.wijayasinghe@gov.ab.ca

Changing face of volunteers

BY FRED TYRRELL – Manager of Stakeholder Relations, Alberta Emergency Management Agency

Volunteers? Where are they? What has happened to them? Our communities used to rely heavily on them, but can we still do so? Volunteers may have been critical in the running of community sports, culture and social activities but they were also essential in the running of many Alberta community fire services. Can Albertans still rely on volunteer services?

It is becoming widely apparent that this creature called a "volunteer" has either become extinct or has undergone a radical change in character. Gone are the days when a person joined an organization for life, expecting no pay or special reward for contributing to the good of the community.

"We are too busy. We are too stretched for time. We have too many other interests to pursue to be able to give lots of free time to only one pursuit. We expect to get something back for our time. We are too tired." How often have we heard these lines, from those community members who we thought we could recruit?

Then there is another set of answers that we get. "Why should I? It's not my problem. That's what I pay taxes for. I'm not giving my time; nobody appreciates it when I do."

Finally, another group of community voices should be heard. Their answers are the ones that we can work with! "I don't know what they expect. I don't know how to do what they do. Isn't it too dangerous? They probably wouldn't want somebody like me. How much time would it take; I'm not sure that I can give all that they expect."

There is no question that the challenge of recruiting and retaining volunteers is getting very difficult. Our communities are, in many cases, getting smaller and the pool of potential volunteers is therefore smaller as well. Modern realities also affect this; many families must have both spouses work and there are fewer hours left for community service. We are also feeling the impacts of our aging society; there are fewer young people than there used to be.

But, is it impossible?

No! The Alberta Fire Chiefs Association and the Alberta Emergency Management Agency will be bringing forward positive, feasible activities that fire services will be able to make use of as they seek to find volunteers. Successful activities from across Canada will be shared with fire departments in Alberta. Other provincial government departments such as Alberta Culture and Community Spirits will be brought in to help us address this real challenge.

Celebrate your successes in your own communities until then! Ring your own bells, and make sure that everyone knows about the fire service. Appoint every firefighter to be a recruiter! Give them the tools they need that will make it easy for people they talk with to say "yes." Volunteers are still out there. They may look different and act different, and we may need to deal with them in different ways, but keep working on it. Help is on the way! 🙌

Alberta Fire Safety Officers Association

New fire safety officer association formed

What used to be the Alberta Fire Marshals Association has evolved into a similar, yet new, entity – the Alberta Fire Safety Officers Association (AFSOA). Town of Westlock Fire Chief Terry Stauffer is the AFSOA president, and says that the association is open to everyone in the fire and emergency services arena.

"The AFSOA serves an important role in the fire and emergency management community," adds Stauffer. "Right now there is a disconnect among our various organizations, which is something that we need to change. We need to create a better connection among fire safety officers and also with the Fire Commissioner (FC) and the Alberta Emergency Management Agency.

We also need to create avenues for efficiently distributing FC information and materials."

Members of the association include fire safety personnel and safety codes officers from the provincial, municipal and industrial sectors. The association creates a direct line to the Alberta Safety Code Council and to experts on fire and building codes – Ray Ligenza and Ray Cox.

"The purpose of our meetings is to talk about the issues facing us, from fire code interpretations to the struggles and difficulties of various incidents. It's a meeting of the minds, really. We can hash out our concerns and support one another in terms of getting code changes," added Stauffer.

Meetings are held in conjunction with the Alberta Building Officials Association (ABOA). A training session held in August in Edmonton enabled members to engage with an inspector from the Petroleum Tank Management Association; and the yet to be announced 2008 AFSOA's annual general meeting will be held in Medicine Hat. Stauffer encourages fire and EM personnel to join the association as the stronger the membership the more vibrant the association will be. 🙌

If you are interested in the AFSOA or want to become a member, contact Terry Stauffer at 780-307-2649.

Steps for a safe and happy holiday season

Now that winter is fast upon us, many Albertans are already making plans for the holiday season. From decorating to cooking to entertaining, fire safety should be a key consideration in any holiday plans. The following safety tips will help everyone be safer this holiday season.

In the kitchen...

Cooking is the #1 cause of home fires. It is best to have a plan beforehand. The plan does not have to be complex, just simply common sense, based on the knowledge that a fire and injuries can happen when cooking in the kitchen. Unattended cooking – the result of the many demands on each one of us at this time of the year – is the real culprit behind cooking-related fires. Here are some ideas to be fire safe when cooking:

- Organize your cooking activities – only prepare one or two dishes at a time.
- Let your family know about the importance of paying attention to cooking.
- Pay attention to what's cooking on the stove or in your oven.
- If distracted, say by a phone call, turn off the heat before leaving the kitchen.
- Stay in the kitchen and attentive to what is cooking.
- Turn pot or pan handles inward to prevent burns caused by overturned pots.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves to avoid clothes catching on fire.
- Keep flammable materials, such as curtains, newspapers or plastic bags, away from heat sources such as burners and the oven.
- Have a pot lid nearby to smother a pan fire.
- If frying foods, use a temperature-controlled electric skillet or deep-fat fryer.

Around the house...

Decorative lights – whether strung on a tree or the eaves of your house, be sure that the lights you use are safe and appropriate for their use.

- Indoor lights should only be used indoors; outdoor lights should only be used outdoors.
- Make sure that your lights are CSA or ULC approved.
- Examine each string of lights for wear and damage.
- Never replace a bulb when the string is lit.
- Run outdoor light cords above the ground to keep them away from snow and water.

Candles – fires related to candles increased 140 per cent during the Christmas season in Alberta homes. Although they often create a holiday mood, they can be very dangerous if not used properly.

- Never place them near trees or other flammable items such as decorations, displays, wrapping paper or pillows or blankets.
- Never leave a candle unattended and be sure to always extinguish candles before leaving the room or going to sleep.

Home heating – keep your home warm and safe with these safety tips.

- Keep at least one metre around portable space heaters.
- Do not overload wood-burning fireplaces; use small quantities of well-seasoned firewood.
- Ensure there is a screen in front of the fireplace to prevent hot embers rolling out. Dispose of ashes in a metal container.
- Turn the fireplace off when leaving the house.

Trees – whether live or artificial, Albertans need to take precautions with trees used during the holidays.

- If purchasing a live tree, check for freshness by pulling on the needles.
- When setting up the tree, cut two to five centimetres diagonally off the base, and place it securely in a large hold; ensure that the water in the holder stays at least one centimetre above the cut to prevent the tree from drying out.
- For an artificial tree, check the label to make sure it is fire-retardant.
- If using an aluminum or metal tree, do not decorate with strings of lights, electrical products or candles (these trees are conductors of electricity).
- Make sure any tree is kept away from exits, heat vents, fireplaces, radiators, televisions and other heat sources.

Entertaining – celebrating the holidays often involves entertaining family and friends. Make your holiday entertaining safe with the following tips.

- After a party, always check on, between and under upholstery and cushions and inside trash cans for smouldering cigar or cigarette butts.
- Keep matches and lights up high, out of sight and reach of children.
- When smokers visit your house, ask them to keep smoking materials with them, and away from small children.

Additional safety tips...

- Ensure you have working smoke alarms on every level in your home. Test and clean them regularly and keep them equipped with fresh batteries at all times.
- Never burn wrapping paper in the fireplace. It can cause an intense fire and ignite creosote that may be built up in the chimney.

No matter how you plan to spend the holidays, have a safe and happy season! 🎄

Collaboration, cooperation and communication-focused exercise well executed

BY TIM CHANDER – Senior Public Affairs Officer, Municipal Affairs/Alberta Emergency Management Agency

EXPLORATIONS ROCK the United States' border at Coutts-Sweetgrass as a railcar blast pierces the morning air. Reports indicate that chlorine gas is released and drifting across the border toward the Village of Coutts. The RCMP is responding to reports of a terrorist attack and the Government of Alberta (GoA) has activated its Government Emergency Operations Centre (GEOC). The GoA's crisis communications team is dispatched to ground zero to provide communications support and to ensure government messaging is delivered to an uneasy group of media.

Operation Sweetgrass started off with a bang on September 18 as 33 agencies and over 300 personnel participated in a full-scale emergency scenario. The disaster was a simulated terrorist attack designed to test the emergency management plans of the various agencies involved in the exercise.

In addition to the involvement of the Public Affairs Bureau (PAB), Municipal Affairs, Solicitor General and Public Security and Environment, the PAB coordinated its communications response with other government departments and stakeholders. This included collaboration with the United States, including the National Guard and the Air Force.

Although the exercise involved a terrorist activity, it was not the specific incident that was important to the Government of Alberta; it was how we as a government



Operation Sweetgrass participants get ready for the mock exercise.

executed our crisis communications plan along with our various department emergency management plans. Details of the incident only became known to participants as the exercise unfolded. Collaboration, cooperation and communication was the theme as the various agencies worked together to ensure that people were safe, secure and well informed.

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency makes it a strong priority to participate in disaster training scenarios

so they can test their emergency response capabilities. It is not until you can encounter an emergency or disaster that you can fully test your response. Participating in these exercises allows the agency to evaluate its plans and strive towards a stronger emergency response.

A full analysis of Operation Sweetgrass will be made available to participating partners in about a month. Recommendations from the report will help Alberta maintain safe and strong communities. 🙌

Personal emergency preparedness for seniors

In September 2007, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, the City of Edmonton, the City of Stony Plain and various agencies that work with seniors undertook the "Personal Emergency Preparedness for Seniors" (PEPS) pilot project. The purpose of the project was twofold:

- develop a program that would provide seniors with information to enhance their resiliency and ability to cope during a disaster, and
- improve their ability to recover after a disaster.

Recognizing that previous experiences and abilities would provide a valuable contribution to others in their community, training sessions and materials were designed to help seniors to be involved in the delivery of personal preparedness information to their peers and within their communities.

The project included:

- a review of best practices,
- consultation with community organizations working with independent and dependent seniors in two municipalities – an urban setting with a population over more than 800,000 and a community of approximately 12,000, and
- a half-day session to train volunteers as trainers.

As well, the project included a half-day session to receive input from municipal staff and seniors involved in 14 presentations to over 350 seniors during May and June 2008.

During the pilot project, staff and volunteer trainers from both municipalities stressed the importance of having a municipal coordinator responsible for:

- providing the necessary resources and contacts to recruit seniors as trainers,
- being the contact number for arranging session dates and times,
- providing support to trainers in the form of session reminders and confirmation of addresses and resources available at the various locations, and
- distributing materials that support the training.

- By way of advertising in the local media, the Town of Stony Plain invited seniors to attend presentations held in municipal facilities.

Each municipality reported that their approach was successful and the working group concluded that a municipality was best able to determine the method for their community.

While the program was intended for seniors who reside in their own homes or apartments, seniors from assisted-living facilities and their staff also attended. The information and presentation materials were reported to be valid to this audience; however, additional questions about specific emergency practices and procedures of the facilities were often asked and needed to be redirected to management of the facilities.

There was general consensus that consideration should be given to additional development of this course. As such, after a province-wide emergency management training needs analysis is conducted, and a training priority list based on resources available is created, a course of this type may be added to the list of those offered by the agency. 

Each municipality reported that their approach was successful and the working group concluded that a municipality was best able to determine the method for their community.

Once this position was established, the municipalities developed different systems for recruiting volunteers and organizing presentation sessions.

- The City of Edmonton recruited through advertisements in selected seniors' organizations; and used these same organizations to advise about available information and arrangements in assigning trainers.

For further information regarding this project or the courses being offered by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, please contact Kris Bruneau at 780-427-8632 or by email at kris.bruneau@gov.ab.ca

Alberta Government Library – Commerce Place Site

*There are a number of
current publications
on the fire service
and emergency
management purchased
by the Alberta Emergency
Management Agency
that are deposited and
available at the Alberta
Government Library at
Commerce Place.*

Contact the library at library.commerceplace@gov.ab.ca to borrow these books:

1. **Chief's clipboard: 20 years of Ronny J. Coleman.** 2006. Jones & Bartlett. (TH 9158 C677 2006)
2. **Engine company fireground operators.** 2008. Harold Richman. (TH 9310.5 R412 2008)
3. **Exam preparation: Airport firefighter.** 2006. Ben Hirst. (TH 9157 H625 2006)
4. **Exam preparation: Building construction for the fire services.** 2008. Ben Hirst. (TH 9145 H618 2008)
5. **Exam preparation: Fire and life safety educator.** 2006. (TH 9123 H627 2006)
6. **Exam preparation: Fire department apparatus driver operator.** 2005. Ben Hirst. (TH 9360 H618 2005)
7. **Exam preparation: Fire department safety officer.** 2006. Ben Hirst. (TH 9158 H618 2006)
8. **Exam preparation: Firefighter I & II.** 2005. Ben Hirst. (TH 9157 H618 2005)
9. **Exam preparation: Fire inspector I & II.** 2005. Ben Hirst. (TH 9176 H618 2005)
10. **Exam preparation: Fire instructor I & II.** 2005. Ben Hirst. (TH 9157 H619 2005)
11. **Exam preparation: Fire investigator.** 2005. Ben Hirst. (TH 9157 H626 2005)
12. **Exam preparation: Fire officer I & II.** 2004. Ben Hirst. (TH 9157 H620 2004)
13. **Exam preparation: First responder – your first response in emergency care.** 2007. David Schottke. (RC 86.7 Sch67 2007)
14. **Exam preparation: Hazardous materials awareness and operations.** 2005. Ben Hirst. (T 55.3 H3 H618 2005)
15. **Exam preparation: Hazardous materials technician.** 2005. Ben Hirst. (T 55.3 H3 H518 2005)
16. **Exam preparation: Industrial firefighter-incipient level.** 2007. Ben Hirst. (TH 9119 H618 2007)
17. **Exam preparation: Medical first responder.** 2006. Ben Hirst. (TH 86.7 H618 2006)
18. **Exam preparation: Technical rescue-high angle.** 2008. Ben Hirst. (TH 9157 H627 2008)
19. **Exam preparation: Technical rescue-ropes and rigging.** 2006. Ben Hirst. (TH 9157 H623 2006)
20. **Exam preparation: Technical rescue-vehicle/machinery and water.** 2006. Ben Hirst. (TH 9157 H624 2006)
21. **Exam preparation: Wildland firefighter.** 2005. Ben Hirst. (SD 420.5 H618 2005)
22. **Field guide for fire investigators.** 2007. National Fire Protection Association. (TH 9180 F455 2007)
23. **Fire and emergency service administration: Management and leadership practice.** 2006. Charles L. Smeby. (TH 9158 Sm31 2006)
24. **Fire and older adult.** 2006. U.S. National Fire Data Center. (TH 9445 A4 F514 2006)

List continued on next page ►►

About the library

The library is located on the 5th floor of Commerce Place, in the downtown area of Edmonton. For the nearest LRT stop, get off at Central Station and use the pedway into Commerce Place.

Telephone: 780-427-4957

Fax: 780-422-1262

Call or email Mica Wickramasekara,
Acting Head Librarian at 780-427-0389
or mica.wickramasekara@gov.ab.ca

Hours are: Mon-Fri: 8:15 a.m. to noon and
1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Closed statutory
holidays. No after-hours bookdrop.

The Alberta Government Library (AGL)
Commerce Place site offers library
and reference services to the staff of
Alberta Municipal Affairs. **View the
Local Government and Public
Safety** page on the AGL website at:

www.servicelink.gov.ab.ca/libraries/local

The Library has a good
information-resource
collection that includes a selection of business
periodicals, Statistics Canada publications,
Alberta legislation, departmental publications
and a wide range of full-text databases.

Reference services are available in person
or by phone and email. Library staff will
search the collection, legislation, databases,
the Internet and other libraries to find the
information requested.

The Library provides an electronic **Table of
Contents** (eToC) service so users may request
and select their favourite journals from the
list and have them delivered to their desktop
through email. Please feel free to suggest new
titles that support your information needs.

Extracts from Hansard relating to the
Ministry are posted daily during the sitting

of the Legislature. The link to the Hansard
extracts is at the link above. Library staff will
send a daily email to anyone who wishes to be
notified that the extracts have been posted.

Contact us to receive your borrower's
card which gives you access not only to
the information and facilities in the AGL
Commerce Place, but also to other libraries
in the NEOS Library Consortium, including
the University of Alberta, several college
and hospital libraries and other government
libraries. In addition, we can locate and order
materials from across the country if they are
not available in the NEOS system.

Information about the Commerce Place site
can be found at: [www.servicelink.gov.ab.ca/
libraries/sites/site-com.cfm](http://www.servicelink.gov.ab.ca/libraries/sites/site-com.cfm)



25. **Fire attack: Strategy and tactics of initial company response: Student text book.** 2nd ed. 2005. Oklahoma State University. (TH 9151 B978 2005)
26. **Firefighter's handbook of hazardous materials.** 2006. Charles J. Baker, Jones & Bartlett. (TH 9446 H38 B171 2006)
27. **Fire officer: Principles & practice.** 2006. International Association of Fire Chiefs. (TH 9119 F514 2006)
28. **Fire prevention in aboriginal communities.** 2007. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (TH 9128 C23 A4 F519 2007)
29. **Fire safety risk assessment: Open air events and venues.** 2007. Great Britain, Dept. of Communities & Local Govt. (TH 9445 P8 F516 2007)
30. **Fire safety risk assessment: Transport premises and facilities.** 2006. Great Britain, Dept. of Communities & Local Govt. (TH 9445 T7 F514 2006)
31. **Fundamentals of firefighter skills: Firefighter field guide.** 2006. Jennifer Reed. (TH 9151 F962 2006)
32. **Fundamentals of firefighter skills-Skills & Drills DVD series: Extinguishers.** 2006. International Association of Fire Chiefs. (TH 9336 Ex85 2006 CD-ROM)
33. **Fundamentals of firefighter skills-Skills & Drills DVD series: Fire Suppression.** 2006. International Association of Fire Chiefs. (TH 9336 F514 2006 CD ROM)
34. **Fundamentals of firefighter skills: Student review manual.** 2004. Henry Morse. (TH 9151 M386 2004)
35. **Fundamentals of fire protection.** 2004. Arthur E.Cote. National Fire Protection Association. (TH 9146 F962 2004)
36. **Fundamentals of search and rescue.** 2005. Donald C. Cooper Ed. National Association for Search & Rescue. (TL 553 B F962 2005)
37. **Guidelines for fire protection in chemical, petrochemical and hydrocarbon processing facilities.** 2003. CCPSAICE. (TH 9445 C47 G941 2003)
38. **Home candle fires.** 2007. Marty Ahrens. National Fire Protection Association. (TH 9123 Ah73 2007)
39. **Leadership guide for combination fire departments.** 2008. Fred C. Windisch. (TH9158 W723 2008)
40. **Technical Rescue: Structural collapse and confined space.** 2006. Ben A. Hirst. (TH 9157 H622 2006)



Periodical titles held at the library include:

- *Canadian Firefighter*
- *Disaster Recovery Journal*
- *Hazmat Management*
- *Jane's Defence Weekly*
- *Occupational Health and Safety*
- *Security Management*
- *SAM-Ski Area Management* 

HIRF update

Increasing public awareness and construction site safety

On May 23, 2008, the Government of Alberta publicly announced that it had accepted 18 of the 22 recommendations made by the working group on high-intensity residential fires (see August 2008 issue of *FIREnews*). One of the accepted recommendations (1.1.1) was to increase public education efforts to inform Albertans about high-intensity residential fires and how to protect their families and their homes. A second of the recommendations (2.3.1) was to develop a generic set of guidelines on the prevention of fires on construction sites for the construction industry.

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency, Public Safety Division and the Communications Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs have taken steps to implement the above two recommendations. Following the release of a Request for Proposals document,

a market research company has been hired to conduct audience research, messaging and delivery. An advisory committee made up of representatives from the following groups has been established to guide the research, development and implementation phases:

- Calgary and Edmonton fire departments
- Alberta Fire Chiefs Association
- Fire & Injury Prevention Educator's Network - Steering Committee
- Municipal Building Regulations Branch (Development and Building Approvals)
- Safety Codes Council.

In addition, a steering committee comprised of representatives from the following divisions within the ministry will provide guidance to the consultants with input from the advisory committee:

- Public Safety Division
- Alberta Emergency Management Agency
- Communications Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs

Future issue of *FIREnews* will provide further updates on this project. 



Collaboration that offers a firefighting program in Saskatchewan

LAKELAND COLLEGE IS WORKING with Parkland Regional College to offer the only full-time firefighting training program in Saskatchewan. "fire etc., an academic school of Lakeland College, is recognized as a leader in delivering quality firefighting instruction," said Fay Myers, CEO of Parkland Regional College.

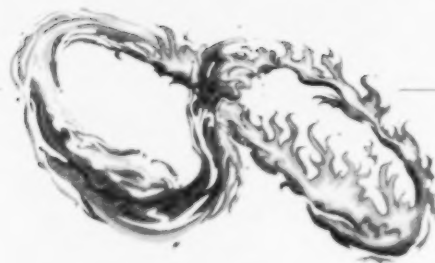
The 12-week firefighter (NFPA 1001) program started in August in the community of Melville, Saskatchewan.

Prior to this collaboration, there were no pre-employment firefighter training programs offered in Saskatchewan. Professional and volunteer firefighters upgrade their skills within local fire departments or by taking courses at the fire etc. training site in Vermilion, Alberta or at Emergency Services College in Brandon, Manitoba.

"Parkland Regional College has received full support from the City of Melville and their fire department, the Yorkton Fire Department, the Saskatchewan Volunteer

The Lakeland College training field includes multiple-storey structural towers, a dangerous goods training area and props that simulate industrial and residential fires, vehicle extrications and aircraft crash rescues.

Firefighters Association and the Office of the Fire Commissioner for this venture," added Larry Pearen, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Programs Manager, who is coordinating the firefighter program at Parkland Regional College.



fire etc.
LAKELAND COLLEGE
emergency training centre

While most of the training for this program is offered in Melville, students are required to go to Lakeland College's Vermilion campus for two weeks to complete some of the practical training that requires highly-specialized equipment. The Lakeland College training field includes multiple-storey structural towers, a dangerous goods training area and props that simulate industrial and residential fires, vehicle extrications and aircraft crash rescues.

There are 24 students in the program and there is already a waiting list for the next intake in early 2009.

Established in 1913, Lakeland College has campuses in Vermilion and Lloydminster. Lakeland College offers full-time, part-time and continuing education programs in academic upgrading, agricultural sciences, business, environmental sciences, fire and emergency services, health and

wellness, human services, interior design technology, performing arts, tourism, trades and technology and university studies.

Visit www.lakelandcollege.ca for details. 

Working with the Northwest Territories

Lakeland College's collaborative efforts also include working with the Government of the Northwest Territories to meet the fire training requirements of small northern communities. In addition, Lakeland College has collaborated with the Office of the Fire Marshal – Ontario to perform evaluations and offer certifications to students taking training at the Fire & Emergency Services Training Institute of the Greater Toronto Airports Authority.

Alberta First Responders Radio Communications System Poised for Launch

THE ALBERTA FIRST RESPONDERS RADIO COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM project (AFRRCS) is currently drafting the RFP and seeking final approval to proceed with this critical initiative.

Solicitor General and Public Security, Special Projects sponsor Bill Meade is encouraged by the support received from the stakeholders across Alberta. In our complex world, the Government of Alberta recognizes how difficult it is to coordinate communications in a routine or emergency situation. An AFRRCS goal is to provide emergency response personnel with the capability to communicate virtually anytime and anywhere within Alberta. The shared radio communications system is intended to give agencies a leg up on interoperability and emergency preparedness. The planned coverage improvement will increase the safety of first responders and all Albertans.

Service Alberta project manager Alan Melenka, Director of Emerging Technologies, acknowledges that the Request for Proposal (RFP) is nearing completion. The project team and the AFRRCS working committee, consisting of representatives from police, fire, emergency medical services and ministries, have collaboratively identified the needs of first responders. The project launch will initiate the design competition through an RFP. The RFP process will result in the selection of a preferred vendor to construct, implement and maintain the radio system. It is anticipated that the project will execute over a five year period.

Last October, a vendor evaluation and prequalification was conducted. The first responder evaluation team identified four multi-vendor arrangements with the appropriate qualifications. The four prime vendors include Bell Mobility, General Dynamics, Raytheon and TELUS. The radio

system manufacturers associated are EADS, MA/COM and Motorola. Following the evaluation, an information session was held with the vendors to provide details related to the project scope. This process gave the vendors an opportunity to establish teams and start preparing their responses. More recently, these vendors were requested to provide comments on the draft RFP. The vendors identified ambiguous requirements, vendor impediments and clarifications with the intent of improving the overall quality of the RFP. As a direct result of the vendor comments, refinements have been made.

Over this same time period, under the direction of Bill Meade, Sierra consultants and the first responder governance working group collaboratively developed a draft Agency Service Level Agreement. The AFRRCS project team was involved to ensure the RFP requirements were aligned. In late March, consultations with first responders were held in Lethbridge, Grande Prairie, Medicine Hat, Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton. First responders contributed their expectations of vendor services and system performance for coverage reliability, network availability and accessibility and reporting. Prior to AFRRCS construction, Solicitor General and Public Security plan to implement the governance structure. The intent is for AFRRCS governance to work with the GoA related to first responder matters associated with the AFRRCS project.

After the release of the RFP, the project team will focus on managing the vendors

First responders contributed their expectations of vendor services and system performance for coverage reliability, network availability and accessibility and reporting.

during the response development, as well as preparing for the final evaluation. The vendors have advocated their strengths, expertise and experience in designing, building and implementing critical systems for public safety and now have the chance to provide a convincing design.

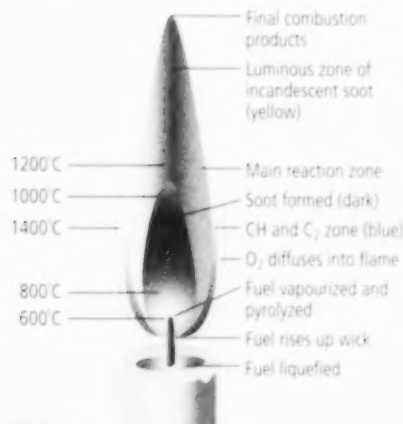
The initial AFRRCS users will be the RCMP, GoA ministries and tentatively Newell County. Other first responder agencies have expressed an interest in getting on AFRRCS as quickly as possible and early adopters will be considered. Discussions will begin with agencies to assist in planning for application and transformation to AFRRCS and a transformation consultant will be added to the project team to assist with the communication. Consultations with first responders are planned to begin in the early fall and agencies will be informed of the times and locations.

This is a major project with significant benefits to all Albertans, but there will be many challenges. First responders consist of a broad range of disciplines with diverse requirements and the success of the project will depend on the cooperation, coordination and collaboration of all participants. In the end this project is striving to maximize the safety of not only first responders, but all Albertans. 🙌

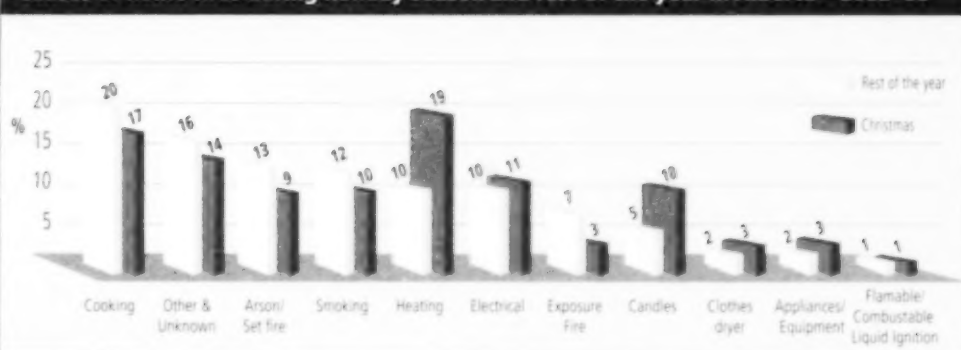
More fires during winter holidays, yet fire causes are similar to the rest of the year

It is a common misconception that most home fires during the winter holiday season are caused by Christmas trees going up in flames. As shown in the chart to the right, **the major causes of home fires are very similar both during the winter holiday season and the rest of the year.** Of course, certain types of fires increase during the holiday season, notably, those related to heating equipment (up 90%), candles (up 100%), clothes dryers (up 50%), appliances/equipment (up 50%) and electrical (up 10%). The chart is based on fire incident data gathered by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency. For statistical analysis, the "winter holiday season" has been defined as the period from December 15 to the 31. There were 409 fires, 4 deaths, 41 injuries and \$21 million in property losses from winter holiday season fires during the five-year period 2002 - 06. Although these fires represented a 14 per cent increase in the number of fires compared to those during the rest of the year, there were no significant differences between these two periods for fire deaths, injuries and property losses.

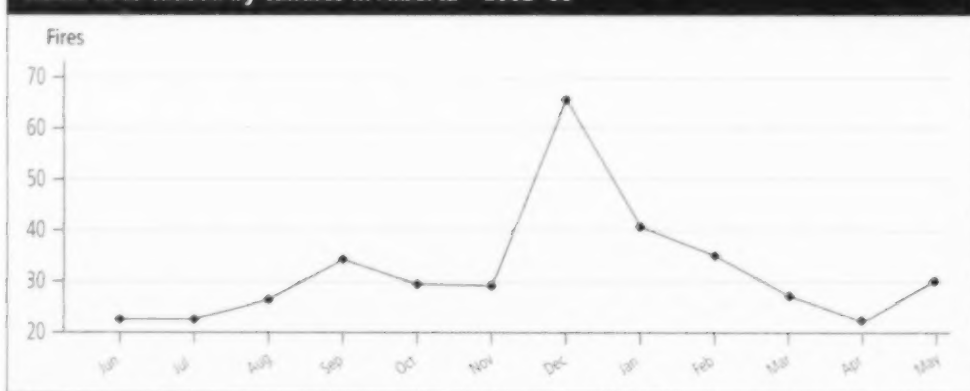
How hot is a candle flame?



Causes of home fires during holiday season and rest of the year in Alberta – 2002 - 06



Home fires caused by candles in Alberta – 2002 - 06



Based on fire incidents reported to the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, fires due to Christmas trees are a rare occurrence. Only three fires related to Christmas trees were reported during the December to January months of the five-year period 2002 - 06. Of these fires, one was due to a candle and another from a space heater. The cause of the third fire was undetermined. The total property damage from these three Christmas tree fires was \$154,100. Thus, although Christmas tree fires are rather rare they can be quite dangerous and damaging. The public must continue to be informed of the fire risks associated with Christmas trees, although not to the exclusion of the common causes of fires as shown in the above chart.

Fire safety messages provided to the communities by fire and emergency services need to include information requesting homeowners and renters to pay special attention to the common causes of home fires. The heightened excitement and extra distractions of visiting relatives, children staying home on school holidays, shopping, decorating, cooking and parties can place a heavy demand on everyone's time and attention, causing many people to overlook basic safety measures. The additional hazards of winter, such as home heating and the use of space heaters, and candles for decoration, increase the fire risk. For example, the increased risk of home fires due to candles during the month of December (a 100 per cent increase over the average number of candle fires per month) is clearly evident in the chart above. 🕯️

Alberta fire chief named association president

CALGARY FIRE CHIEF Bruce Burrell was elected as the new President of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) at its annual conference in Whitehorse.

The CAFC, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, is a non-partisan national association representing some 1,000 chief fire officers located in every province and territory of Canada. It is the only association that speaks for all elements of the fire services in Canada.

In accepting the presidency from outgoing President Patrick Burke, Fire Marshal

of Ontario, Fire Chief Burrell stated, "My focus will be continuing to highlight the need for a national voice for the Canadian Fire Service. I will continue to support initiatives and calls to action by all levels of government to support volunteer firefighters and changes to the building and fire codes. And, I will work with CAFC members to enhance the capability of municipalities to deal with the broad range of risks facing them and their fire departments."

Fire Chief Burrell began his firefighting career as a volunteer firefighter in New

Minas, Nova Scotia. He joined the Halifax Fire Department in 1984, and became Deputy Chief Director for the department in June 2003. He became Calgary Fire Chief in August 2005.

The Calgary Fire Department has approximately 1,275 members. There are currently 33 fire halls in Calgary, with another being opened in about a month, serving Calgary's population of over one million people.

Before his election as President, Chief Burrell was first Vice-President of the CAFC. 🏠

Digest

In memoriam

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of the following fire personnel:

Allan Friesen, retired Captain of the Town of Taber Emergency Services, passed away on September 15, 2008.

Ashley Sinclair, firefighter with the Ardmore Volunteer fire department died in an ultralite plane crash on September 13, 2008.

Buck Ruggles, Fire Chief of the Lomond Fire Department, was killed in a motor vehicle collision on August 20, 2008.

Rachel Mohl, firefighter with the Hanna Fire Department, was killed in a motor vehicle collision in Saskatchewan in August 2008.

Former Fire Chief **Dennis Montgomery (Monty)** passed away on October 7, 2008 with wife Sheila at his side. Dennis' fire service career included serving as Fire Chief in Mackenzie, British Columbia; Fire Chief in Dawson City, Yukon; lieutenant and volunteer firefighter with the Yellowknife Fire Department; and Fire Services Advisor with the Fire Prevention Branch in Peace River. A bursary will be put in his name at the high school in Mackenzie, British Columbia.

A widow's awakening

Maryanne Pope, the widow of Constable John Petropoulos, and managing director of the John Petropoulos Memorial Fund (JPMF) has written a creative, non-fiction book about her experience following the on-duty death of her husband. Called *A Widow's Awakening*, the book was released at the end of September. Twenty per cent of the proceeds will go to the JPMF to raise funds and awareness about workplace safety for emergency services personnel. To obtain a copy of the book or learn more about the JPMF, visit www.jpmpf.ca

Mark your calendar

- **Nov. 4** – SOREM (Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management, prov/fed.), St. John's, Newfoundland
- **Nov. 4-9** – CHRNet Symposium, St. John's, Newfoundland
- **Nov. 8-13** – AAMD&C Conference, Edmonton
- **Nov. 15-20** – 56th National Conference of Citizen Preparedness, Toronto – www.iaem.com
- **Nov. 21** – Business Continuity Forum (AEMA)
- **Nov. 25-27** – British Columbia 21st Emergency Preparedness Conference – www.jibca/epconference
- **Nov. 26-29** – Family & Community Support Services Association of Alberta annual conference – www.fcassaa.ab.ca/conferences02.htm
- **Jan. 22-23** – Emergency Management Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Meeting, Edmonton

Agency staff updates

- **Ron Jarrett** left the Agency to return to the Canadian Armed Forces.
- **Mary-Ann McLennan** left the Agency for a promotion at Alberta Environment.
- **Humyra Sabir** is now an Acting Director, replacing Greg Carter who has joined Alberta Environment.
- **Herb Presley** has moved to Acting Manager of the Business Continuity Plans branch.

In other news...

The City of Red Deer's new Disaster Services Coordinator is Don Huestis.

Children help kick off Fire Prevention Week 2008

JUDGING FROM FEEDBACK received from a number of fire departments and media outlets, Fire Prevention Week 2008 was a success in Alberta. This year's theme: It's Fire Prevention Week: Prevent Home Fires! focused on home fire prevention by providing a campaign kit that included a number of articles about the most common causes of home fires and the steps that can be taken to prevent them.



Minister of Alberta Municipal Affairs Ray Danyluk and Acting Fire Commissioner Ernie Polsom share fire prevention tips with school children.



Sparky and Acting Fire Commissioner Ernie Polsom distribute fire hats to school children.

The Children's Program component of Fire Prevention Week was sponsored by ATCO Gas and ATCO Electric. This corporate sponsor supported the printing of nearly 170,000 activity booklets, an advertisement in 110 member newspapers of the Alberta Weekly Newspaper Association and funded the provincial grand prize of a home computer system for a winning child.

Fire Prevention Week was officially kicked off at a media event held at Prince Charles Elementary School in Edmonton on October 8, 2008. Officiating at the event were the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs, Ray Danyluk, Acting Fire Commissioner Ernie Polsom and Bill Stephens, Vice President, Edmonton Operations, ATCO Gas. 🚒



The Honourable Ray Danyluk meets with reporters during Fire Prevention Week 2008.

Alberta FIREnews is published by the Alberta Emergency Management Agency for the information of fire/emergency management professionals and others with a related interest in this field.

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*Wishing you
and your family
a safe and happy
holiday season.*